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From W. R. Lawrence, Esq., C. S., Under-Secretary to the Government of India, To The Secretary to the Governments of Madras, Bombay, Bengal and the Punjab, the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces, Ajmere and Coorg, Revenue and Agricultural Department (Agriculture), Circular No. 46—16-28 A, dated Simla, the 26th August 1887.

Sir,—In continuation of the previous Circulars noted in the margin, I am directed to forward for information a copy of a report by Dr. E. Bonavia on the cultivation of the date-palm in India and to suggest that it should be communicated to Agricultural Departments and to District Officers and others who are interested in the experimental cultivation of the palm.

No. 3—15-9 A, dated the 1st May 1886.
No. 52—15-21 A, dated the 20th September 1883.

2. As Dr. Bonavia is convinced that plants raised from seed will generally yield true varieties, the Government of India is of opinion that future importations should ordinarily be confined to seeds as they can be readily obtained and at little expense. The Government of India is willing to assist in procuring from Persia or Egypt any seeds which may be required for cultivation and to make an aggregate annual grant not exceeding Rs. 500 for this purpose, but in consideration of the importance of date culture in India it is hoped that———will be able to contribute towards the cost of importing seeds and it is now desired that the quantity of seed required by———together with the amount of money if any which can be contributed towards the cost of purchase and freight may be communicated to the Government of India as early as possible.

I have, &c.,
W. R. LAWRENCE,
Under-Secy. to the Govt. of India.

Dated London, the 4th July 1887.

From—Dr. E. Bonavia, Brigade-Surgeon, Indian Medical Department (on leave), To—Secretary to Government, N.-W. Provinces and Oudh.

SIR—I have the honor to submit, to the Government of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, the following information regarding the date-palm.

2. Convinced as I am that this useful tree, if largely introduced in India, would eventually be of great benefit to the people, I have collected information about it from all the countries where it is extensively grown. This information I now beg to place at the disposal of the Government of India.

3. As there may still be some doubts in India whether *seedling* date-trees are of any value, I paid particular attention to this point in making inquiries. In a letter from Sir R. Lambert Playfair, Her Majesty's Consul-General for Algeria and Tunis, dated Algiers, the 11th January, 1887, the following is stated: "From what you say, I have no doubt that off-sets could be sent to India without much difficulty; but really there is very little necessity for making the experiment. Seeds are sure to germinate, and the experience of the Arabs here is, that the fruit of seedlings is quite as good as that of trees propagated by suckers. The only objection is, that there is the risk of obtaining an undue proportion of male trees." Then C. Regnier in his "Observations sur le Palmier Dattier, et sur sa culture en Egypt," says: "Seedlings sometimes produce bastard varieties. More frequently they perpetuate well-known varieties. At other times *new* kinds are raised, which are afterwards propagated by off-sets."

4. The foregoing is good evidence of the value of seedling date-trees. We have, however, proof of it in India already. Before leaving India on leave, I sent, to the Director of the Royal Gardens at Kew, a fine collection of dates, solely from seedling trees grown in Oudh and Multan. They are now in the Economic Museum at Kew. Moreover, what Sir Lambert Playfair considers as a slight objection to raising seedling trees, I would consider an advantage, at first, for India. Fertilization of the female flowers by the pollen of the males is not generally known yet in India. An excess of males among females would therefore ensure a crop, and would not disappoint the growers. In course of time India would possess fine varieties of date-trees, and then it could easily furnish its own off-sets of female trees, and fertilize them, as they do in other countries. In addition, the great advantage of seeds just now is, that they cost comparatively little to import, and can be made into fruit trees, with less trouble than off-sets, so that all the places in India where the date-tree can be grown with advantage may be rapidly furnished with this important tree at a small cost.